The

Chicago Theological Seminary

Register

Published Four Times a Year, January, March, May and November,
by the Chicago Theological Seminary

Vol. IV. MAY, 1911 No. 4

THE COUNTRY LIFE NUMBER

CONTENTS

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EDITORIAL.

The country church is in constant evidence in the social literature of to-day. Whether it presents a problem or only a job is an open question. In either case it is commanding attention. So the current number of THE REGISTER is devoted to phases of this topic. If a sense of responsibility and opportunity may be quickened its purpose will be served.

The articles are of sufficient worth to secure perusal on their own account; but brief biographical notes may add to the interest. Dr. Butterfield is president of the Massachusetts Agricultural College. He has been identified with the cause of education from early manhood, first as extension worker in connection with the agricultural college of Michigan and subsequently as president of state agricultural colleges in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, respectively. He was an important member of the National Country Life Commission and is one of the best known promoters of "better living" as a factor in rural progress. His readiness to contribute out of his crowded time to this issue of THE REGISTER is a token of the importance and the interest he attributes to the church.

Mr. Edwards, the Congregational student pastor at the University of Wisconsin, is alert with an intelligence and enthusiasm characteristic of that university toward every phase of social betterment. His article is indicative of the stand being taken and the work being done by the church at large and particularly by our own denomination in Wisconsin.

Mr. Platt is a graduate of Washburn College and of the Seminary in the class of 1894. Like his father before him, who was a pioneer preacher in Kansas, and who preached the first sermon in several counties, Mr. Platt has given his talents of hard work, organization, versatility of endeavor and effective service to rural communities. He knows whereof he writes.

Mr. Deiman is the Seminary Fellow for the current year. His two years of advanced study will be spent in agricultural colleges and on the field. He is a man of wide knowledge, of mature judgment and of earnest purpose. Although no arrangements have been completed, it is hoped that he will be able to conduct a course on the Rural Life in our Correspondence Department. If there is a demand for this, a word to the Seminary to that effect would guide us in our judgment.

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SOME RURAL PROBLEMS.

President Kenyon L. Butterfield,
Massachusetts Agricultural College.

It is unfortunate that we have so often misinterpreted the essential divinity of profit-making toil. It is doubly unfortunate that we have so little preaching to-day concerning the fundamental need of securing out of profit-producing labor a result to manhood essentially moral.

The individual farmer farms in order that he may make a profit. To ignore this fact is to begin at the wrong end of the whole rural problem. To enable the individual farmer to make a better profit is the first rural question.

The same principle applies to the farmers as a class. Indeed, merely to teach a comparatively small number of individual farmers to make a larger profit is not hitting the real rural problem. An efficient teacher of political economy said to me the other day, "The rich men of America, whether consciously or not, believe in the peasantizing of the American farmer." This may not be the fact. It is probably true that the unbridled industrial forces of the day are tending to peasantize the American farmer. One means of checking this tendency is deliberately to attempt to make farming as a business more profitable to the great *mass* of the farmers.

The Master gave new validity to the old proverb that man does not live by bread *alone,* but He never denied the necessity of bread. The increasing millions of our cities must have food; the

farmer must grow this food. The farmer's interest is to grow this food at a minimum of expense and to dispose of it at a maximum of profit. The consumer's interest is to have a constant and varied supply of wholesome, nutritious food at a minimum of cost. Herein lies one great problem of civilization—this adjustment between the grower and the eater. Now the adjustment must be made in terms of equity to both. If we cheapen food at the expense of the grower, we not only lessen the efficiency of a fundamental industry, but we cheapen the man who grows the food. We must seek, then, so to balance these apparently opposing interests that they shall merge into one common interest.

The practical means of achieving the industrial independence of the farmer seem to be two: (1) Industrial education; (2) business co-operation. The forces of education are gradually organizing themselves into a comprehensive campaign for reaching every man on the soil with the gospel of better methods of farming. Business co-operation among American farmers develops slowly. The pressure of necessity, however, must soon achieve real results. The difference between the farmer's price and the consumer's price is so markedly excessive that sooner or later, through co-operation among the growers and probably through a parallel co-operation among the eaters, the present economic waste in food-distribution may be eliminated. One of the important features of this general campaign for industrial betterment of the farming class is the inauguration of agricultural surveys, by which an intimate study is to be made of the conditions under which a given community of farmers may best pursue their work.

Given this foundation of business profit to the farming class, what shall we build thereon? For let no man suppose that we are to be content with the industrial foundation only. The structure which shall rise on the solid walls of business gain must be a multitude of rural neighborhoods in which the upbuilding of human character and the development of human welfare are, after all, the

great facts. In other words, we must have rural communities which, in respect to morality, intelligence, sociability, spiritual life, idealism, shall represent some of the high results that we anticipate from our on-going civilization.

This means that the institutions of the community must be active, efficient, permanent. These institutions comprise three great classes—the schools and other means of education, the farmers' organizations and other means of class co-operation, the church and all agencies of religion. The relation between these institutions and the economic success of the community is very close. Mere industrial prosperity in a farming region by no means indicates that human welfare has been guarded. There are in America to-day prosperous farming regions where school, church, farmers' society are weak and inefficient. On the other hand, it is almost impossible to build up great social institutions except where a reasonable business prosperity exists. Of course, the great thing is not business prosperity, but justice, mercy, truth, all those things that we call character. Even these great social institutions are but means to an end, and the end is human character.

In the development of a great rural civilization it is important that the institutions of society shall realize that the point of view is the vital thing. Is the country church, for example, a sort of ship whose sole purpose is to convey its officers and sailors to a port of safety, serving merely those who belong to it? Or is it designed to utilize the service of the officers and crew for the purpose of carrying the whole community to a larger life? Does the church belong to the people who belong to the church, or does the church belong to all who need it?

The same thought comes up with reference to the work of the school, of the grange, of the public library, of the agricultural college, of the family—yes, of the individual farmer. Is the profit of the individual, the enlargement of the organization, the gain of the few to be the entire purpose? Or shall we recognize the com-

munity idea and so develop community service, community institutions, community pride, community programs, community ambitions?

This idea of the integrity of the community, whether it be of the city or of the country neighborhood, seems to be growing apace, and I think promises to revitalize the forces of righteousness. We are not to ignore the individual, but to magnify the good of all. It is not that we deny the rights of the man, but that we magnify the rights of men, and especially the duty of the individual to his fellows. It is not that we shall leave undone the service to the one, but that we shall enlarge the service to the many. In our rural life this community idea specially needs to be emphasized because of the extreme individualism of the farmer.

There are many minor problems of our American rural life. I have thus far outlined the fundamental things. We need also, for example, better roads and other means of communication in the country districts in order that the comparative isolation of the farmer and his family may be diminished and a closer union of interests be developed.

We need a larger, a saner, a healthier recreative life in the country. The play spirit must have larger scope and must run through cleaner channels.

Rural ideals must be developed—ideals of personal life and character, ideals of beautification, ideals of community advancement, ideals of local patriotism.

The poetry of farm life needs enhancing in the minds of the sons of the soil. Out of all the toil and drudgery of farm life, out of blighting frost and withering drought, out of the thunder and the hail, there shall emerge a great sentiment of joy, an exhilaration in working hand in hand with the Lord God Almighty.

Intellectual interests need enforcement through more efficient schools, through public libraries, through organized reading courses, through active agencies of culture.

Woman's work must be simplified in its drudgery, magnified in its service, and placed on a plane at once scientific and inviting. This is no small task. It calls for study, devotion, sympathy and perpetual effort.

The city and the country are to work together, because in the last analysis the rural problem is simply a phase of the problem common to both city and country—a better civilization. The farmer constitutes a class somewhat by himself, but he is an integral part of the total life of the nation. He is not to be ignored by the city man. They must work together in order that each may come to his own, and in order that each may contribute of his own to the common welfare of all.

COMMUNITY THINKING IN THE COUNTRY TOWN CHURCH.

Rev. Richard Henry Edwards,

Congregational University Pastor, University of Wisconsin.

Country town churches predominate in practically all denominations. Run over the rolls and this will be strikingly manifest. In many states the churches located in large cities or in the open country are so few in number as to be well-nigh negligible in generalizations. The country town church is beginning to interest all of us, and not alone because it is the most prevalent of all idealistic social institutions, but also because it is an indigenous growth representing a certain amount of actual socialization; because it is a pregnant generator of ethical influences, and because the Christianity which it professes is such a high-power social dynamic wherever the church lets it loose.

Potentially, at least, the country town church has the higher life of the nation in its grasp. As one goes across country in an aeroplane he sees this dotted out on the landscape beneath him. If some Son of God could only quicken every one of these churches to full social efficiency the healing of the nation would be imminent. If all of them could be released to a lively community consciousness and made betterers of social conditions, as well as inspirers of individual souls, then the Kingdom of Heaven would begin to glide in our direction.

Let us look in on one of them. It may be any one of the two to ten churches which the average country town affords. The denomination makes little difference. Sociologically speaking, the denominations are all pretty much alike. A company of people get together for the worship of God, for religious and social fellowship, and for the proclamation of the "Gospel," as they conceive it, to the community. They are united by certain ideas about the Great Head of the Church, by certain bonds of sentiment, by certain tra-

ditions about church government, by a temperamental kinship and social relationships.

A beneficent work is being done if the church is even moderately efficient. Children are being taught some of the fundamentals of righteousness. In the face of the pathetic and general tendency of religious ideals and moral standards to sag, the ideals and standards of a number of people here are being upheld. Religious aspirations and purposes are being quickened. Young people are learning to live unselfishly. The ideal personality is being held aloft as imitable. A few members are added to the church yearly; and its very presence in the community acts as an inhibition upon the forces of wickedness.

But the same social fallacy which has characterized the thinking of the other established institutions in the community characterizes likewise the thinking of the church. The lodges, the women's groups, the literary and social clubs have all thought of the community merely as a source of membership. Their primary purpose has been mutual pleasure or profit for their members and the maintenance of their organization. The community might be helped incidentally through benefits received by members, but the definite purpose to improve social conditions in the community has not been co-ordinately developed with the particular purpose of the organization. The common fact about all these groups in an unsocialized town is that they build up an organization out of the community and give their zeal, their loyalty, their enthusiasm to it as an end in itself. The social fallacy has been to boost "our lodge," "our club," "our association," without recognizing the obligation which rests upon every organized group of citizens to boost also "our town." The resulting jealousies and cross purposes are painfully familiar, not to mention the utter lack of any community purpose or program.

The country town church, except in rare cases of socialization, has fallen into this same social fallacy. A cross-section of its work

would reveal how abnormally large an amount of effort is devoted to the maintenance of the organization. Its gospel is mostly for the comfort, guidance and inspiration of its own members. There is not much thorough "Social Gospel" in it yet. Personal morals and other worldliness are both standardized, and its benevolences, by analogy, are first for its own poor and then for foreign missions. The local community slips between the two. It has never had the focus in church thinking and is still "the world"—the evil world out of which "sinners" are to be saved for heaven. The concrete community ideal has not yet stirred the creative imagination of the average country town church. The unselfishness preached in the pulpit and nobly practiced in the community by individuals has not been practiced toward the community by the churches as organizations; and the absence of thorough community action is a primary reason why the organization is often so hard to maintain. The churches have not been willing to lose their group lives, if need be, in order that they might gain a perfected community life. Church competition and overlapping are pathetic proof.

And yet a certain amount of community action has been taken by the average country town church. The attack upon a trinity of social evils has long been standardized. They are poverty, vice and intemperance. From the beginning the poor of the parish have been cared for and a certain amount of benevolence has leaked over into the community. From the beginning vice has been attacked because of its inherent hatefulness to the Christian conscience and because it undermines the very organization of the church itself as with the Corinthians to whom Paul wrote. In recent times the incompatibility of intemperance with Christianity has become so clear that it, too, has been put under the ban. These are the most flagrant of social evils, conspicuously hateful and anti-Christian, and it is a great achievement for the Christian consciousness to have standardized the attack upon them. The average coun-

try town church has measured up pretty well in this warfare and is worthy of all praise, for much of its struggle has been downright valiant fighting against as bad beasts as those at Ephesus. All the way through, despite its weaknesses, the church has been a mighty molder of public opinion, an inspirer of moral leadership, and has revealed the chariots and horsemen of fire which fight with those who fight for righteousness.

And yet in the new day of the social awakening the church cannot be content with only three social enmities. There must be more and sharper. He who came to give not peace but a sword calls the country town church to standardize the attack on a larger number of social evils. Concrete community thinking in any town will make clear what they are. We are in the process of enlargement already under the impetus of the social movement. Some of the churches are awake to the hideousness of the child labor problem. The long workday for women, and industrial exploitation in general, begin to be rated as anti-Christian. Corruption in government is branded, if not abolished. The anti-tuberculosis crusade is now generally supported. Gradually the churches increase the number of their social hostilities. Wherever the forces of wickedness and oppression show their heads, there the churches must learn to think like a flash and wield two-edged swords.

But the negative approach to the community, however effective, is not enough. Constructive community thinking is needed. Why not dare to look for creative imagination in the churches, for a definite social betterment program for "our town," and the consecrated leadership which alone will make its achievement possible? Why should a church not do some concrete thinking like this about the public health—Has there been any illness or death from a preventable disease in "our town" lately? Yes, a number of cases. Could such calamities in "our town" be due to an open cesspool, an insanitary slaughter-house, stagnant swamp water, a defiled stream, unventilated homes, venereal contagion, or old dwelling

houses that the health officer should have condemned long ago? Jesus gave much time to healing the sick. Is the social prevention of disease any less divine? Why not get down to the study of the health of our town? Why not make every nook of it sanitary? Why not establish health education and see that every boy and girl has a fair chance to grow a clean body, a healthy mind and a beautiful soul?

Why not do some more thinking like this about public recreation? Did not Jesus go blithely through the fields with his friends and relish the joy at a wedding in Cana of Galilee?

Why not do some concrete thinking about town beautification?

Did the Master not quicken at the waving lilies and draw profoundest truth from the beauty of the habitable earth?

Why not some more thinking about the actual state of morals in "our town" and those hidden parasites that work in the lives of boys and girls?

Did He not dare to utter the aboslute ideal for sex morality and did He not love the ineffable beauty of childhood with a love unspeakable and full of wrath for its spoilers?

And then why not some more concrete thinking about business conditions, about education, about government and other things?

Shall the churches not dare to plan an ideal community—the best possible people living together in friendliness in "our town" under the best possible conditions? Why should any average country town church not dream a new dream?—and not so new, either! Social Perfectionism! That's the need! Personal perfectionism gets easily sidetracked on the switch of piosity. Put social perfectionism on the other end of the axle and then the country town church will speed on the main track straight to the Kingdom of Heaven.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN A RURAL FIELD.

Rev. Dwight H. Platt, Overbrook, Kan.

I take it that the editor of The Register in the series of articles dealing with problems of rural churches which he is herewith presenting, desires not so much discussion of theories as description of methods which have been tried. I am asked to write of "Religious Education in a Rural Field."

I. The Field. Its center is Overbrook, Kansas, a village of 500 people in a rich and populous farming community. The parish is located in the main in the northeast corner of Osage county, but extends several miles east and southeast into Douglas and Franklin counties. It is nearly twenty miles across, extending through a radius ten miles from Overbrook. The population is American, farmers of the best type. The parish is geographically the educational center of Kansas. The Kansas State Agricultural College is 75 miles northwest; Washburn College (Congregational), 25 miles northwest; the Kansas State University, 30 miles northeast; Baker University (M. E.), 18 miles east; Ottawa University (Baptist), 25 miles southeast; the Kansas State Normal School and the College of Emporia (Presbyterian), 50 miles southwest. The parish sends young people to all of these schools. The village maintains a high school which is upon the credited list of the state university. In the village are an M. E., a Congregational and a small Dunkard church. Both the M. E. and Congregational churches have out-stations where Sunday afternoon services are held. The extent and populousness of the parish give the M. E. and Congregational churches room for growth without crowding.

II. The Educational Work of the Congregational Church of Overbrook. The minister gives Biblical instruction a conspicuous place in his work. This instruction may be described under five heads:

1. *The Monday Night Class.* This class is made up of men and women who work hard every day. It meets each week at the

home of the Sunday school superintendent. The minister is the teacher. He works out his own course of study. Mimeograph copies of the work for each evening are given the class one week in advance. The studies are historical. Since its organization two years ago the class has gone thoroughly into the study of the history of the Hebrew people up to the close of the reign of King Saul. Questions of history, geography, comparative religion and Biblical criticism have been investigated in the light of modern scholarship. At the close of each period the class takes a written test. Papers are carefully examined and rigidly graded. The members of this class are carrying the responsibilities of home and business, but their teacher would not fear to put them into a competitive examination with college students who have taken courses in the Bible School of Washburn College.

2. *The Brotherhood Class.* This class consists of men only. It holds a certificate as an organized adult Bible class of the Kansas State Sunday School Association and is also a chapter of the Congregational Brotherhood of Kansas. It combines the features of both of these institutions. Last fall it entertained 75 men at a three-course lunch in the Grange Hall. The principal speaker was Prof. W. D. Stem of Abilene. Bible study overshadows everything else with this class. After joining in the opening exercises of the Sunday school the men adjourn in winter to the parlor of the manse and in summer to the beautiful grove at the rear of the church. The minister also teaches this class.

Each man is assigned a topic one week in advance. Below is an abridged outline of a recent Sunday morning study:

AMOS.

I. *Amos, the Man.*

1. The great prophets of Israel during this period.
2. The birthplace and early training of Amos.

II. *Amos, the Prophet.*

1. The style of Amos.

2. The theology of Amos.
3. The message of Amos.
4. The introductory address of Amos. (Amos 1:3; 2:16).
5. Some forms of unrighteousness denounced by Amos:
   (1) The oppression of the poor.
   (2) The extravagance and vices of the rich.
   (3) The attitude of Jeroboam II and his nobles toward truth-speaking prophets.
   (4) The execution of justice in the civil and criminal courts of Jeroboam II.
   (5) Amos' estimate of the popular religion of the times.

Each man is given in turn a sub-topic like one of the above. The teacher places in his hands sources of information. At the hour of recitation he is called upon to give the class all the information which he has gathered upon his sub-topic. No one is allowed to interrupt him while he is doing this. When he is done, the sub-topic is thrown open for a short general discussion by the class. Then the teacher clinches the discussion briefly. Then the class takes up the next sub-topic in the same manner. The class does not feel compelled to complete a study at a single session. The study not finished one Sunday morning is continued the next Sunday morning. The aim is thoroughness.

The minister also prepares such outlines and sources of information for a large class of young men and women, who are under the instruction of another teacher. I wish I had time to describe in detail the work of this young people's class and also the work of an organized class of women.

III. The Cradle Roll and Home Department. These need only mention. They are carried on effectively.

IV. The Primary Sunday School. It has a separate organization and meets entirely separately from the other Sunday school. The graded course, kindergarten methods, modern peda-

gogical principles are applied by the junior superintendent, Mrs. J. A. Kesler, assisted by a diligent corps of teachers. The thoroughness of this work will compare favorably with that which is being done for the same children in the public schools.

V. Expository Lectures and Sermons. The minister has not abandoned entirely the topical method of preaching, but he finds himself using the expository method with more frequency, with greater satisfaction to himself and with more marked acceptability by the people. He recently closed a series of sermons on "The Decalogue in the Light of the Sermon on the Mount," which was listened to with increasing interest. During the year he has also given two series of Thursday evening lectures; one upon "The Gospel of Matthew," the other upon "Second Isaiah."

The success of this educational program, which is now well into its second year, is due largely to the willing response of the people. The progressiveness of the Sunday school superintendent, Mr. J. A. Kesler, and his faithful corps of teachers have made such a program possible. Minister, superintendent, teachers and pupils are all ordinary people with no marked genius except the genius for *hard work*. The people have not asked for easy things to do, and the minister has not given them easy things to do. That the results in terms of Christian character will be far-reaching and thorough-going is our firm belief.

THE STRATEGIC COUNTRY CHURCH.

Rev. Harry Deiman, Geddes, S. D.

An educator of distinction and of critical judgment recently wrote that the next great religious revival would emanate from the country. He gave no reason for such a conclusion. We are put to no difficulty in finding reasons in abundance to justify such a statement. In this brief essay we shall attempt to show what are the prevailing conditions of city life and why they make impossible, at least for a time, a genuine revival of religion. Secondly, we shall endeavor to state the conditions which make possible a religious revival for the rural life of our country. Thirdly, we shall briefly indicate the way the revival is to be consummated.

We have seen within a few decades the population gravitate away from the country into the city. So abnormal has been this migration that now nearly half our population is living in cities. No sign at present indicates that the abnormal condition shall cease. It is very hard to say what motives have acted as incentives to this mighty shifting of population. The real cause often lies beneath the assignable reasons. We may hazard a guess. The rapid industrial development has offered great opportunity for financial gain. The city has a charm all its own, indescribable and attractive as any lake or mountain side. To be with people from every part of the globe, to feel the thrill of a cosmopolitan population is an exquisite pleasure. The complaint is that the farm is lonesome, that it is deficient in interesting pleasure, while the city offers an unending attraction of amusements. Then, too, the opportunities for advancement for ambitious people are multiplied. The fact that other people are going to the city makes a subtle appeal. "It is the thing to do." To use one of the common phrases of the day—it is a social movement.

As a result we have our city conditions which have assumed a most menacing aspect. Some are willing to say that the healthy life of the nation depends upon the degree with which the city

life is brought into conformity with the higher political, moral and religious standards. Business has grown so large as to dominate other interests. The desire for pleasure has become a riot of indulgence. Popular novels and penny newspapers register the acceptable standards of literary taste. These secure a reading public largely because of the novelties they are able to display. Good breeding, moral soundness and religious conservatism are sadly out of style. The iconoclast wins a hearing, no matter what nonsensical views his deranged mentality may conjure forth. Men and women are treated to liberal doses of nauseating flattery by writers and leaders who are either insincere or victims of their own brand of illusions. These leaders possess no knowledge of the past, are incapable by temperament and training of entering into historical idealism, and are so profoundly impressed with their own ideas that they believe the experience of men in other generations entirely vague. Too often their teachings are only the reflections of their own personal desires. Accepted standards block the way to indulgences they fain would seek, so they cry, "This is an age of liberty," and then talk superficially about soul realization and new standards of conduct about to supersede old ones.

It is not to be denied that earnest, deep-thinking men are busily engaged in trying to solve the city problem. They are attempting to give the cities a laboratory course in government and morals. One thing after another is tried, often to the utter confusion of the reformers and not infrequently to the merriment of their opponents. Some cities give indication of decided improvement, while others have only sunken more deeply into the cesspool of political corruption and moral turpitude. Only recently that intrepid champion of good government, Heney, in San Francisco said that his own fair city was more completely manacled to corruption than ever before. The awakening was only a prelude to a slavery more abject than ever. No authority outweighs Heney concerning conditions on the coast. If we turn to moral condi-

tions they are just as aggravating. In one of the recent medical works entitled "Women" the author remarks that in large cities man practically lives in savage promiscuity. The reports of various commissions which have investigated vice in large cities are very startling. One authority in a recent address said that the innocence of maidenhood in factory and shop, so dear to sentiment and the poetic heart, was a thing of the past. Our city is being drawn into the maelstrom of a terrible iniquity. The remedies so far discussed do not strike at the root of the evil. When we turn to organized religion we find a policy of retrenchment pursued. Most of the religious workers are primarily concerned with holding the fort. An aggressive, militant Christianity which is capable of stemming the tide has not yet appeared. We read the reports of various religious conferences and they speak of spiritual uplift and are often highly gratified to record no losses. Spasmodic revival meetings do not even touch the surface of things in a city. The great masses to whom the appeal is directed do not as much as have their attention taken away from the busy round of parties and theater-going. If they should stop to give an opinion on the revival they would say it was a lingering superstition, strangely out of place in a modern world whose religion is that of cosmic emotion and whose morals are frankly pagan.

So we find many sane thinkers turning to the country for the promise of the future. As in the past, so in the future the blood that is rich, pure and capable must come from the country. An examination of the childhood and youth of any large number of leaders in city life will disclose the fact that a majority of them are from the country, and they only entered the turmoil of city life when well developed physically and mentally. City life would rapidly deteriorate if it were not for the constant influx of health, vitality and moral stamina from the country districts. This vigor from the country is absorbed and subject to the deteriorating influences of the city. The things that wear people out are found in

the city. The din of an incessant, nerve-racking noise, the push, excitement and worry of business life, the demands made upon time and strength by society and pleasure, and sometimes the lure of degrading vice sap vitality from countless thousands. Here extremes tend to develop, we find the squalid home of poverty by the simple process of addition turned into a full-grown slum. Wealth reaching the full meridian of its strength tries to bring all forms of activity into subservience to its own mercenary standards. Bigness is worshiped, refinement and culture discredited. The youth and maiden with the strength of oak in limb and the freshness of springtime in eye are soon swallowed up in the city.

We know from history that even after mighty nations have fallen the country life of those nations was untainted. The city being the center and expression of the nation, when it fell the nation was lost. Easy methods of transportation, and cheap and quick means of communication tend to dissolve the difference between country and city life in modern times. The sentiments and ideals of a city find their way to the country as rapidly as they do to the suburb. There is a certain glamor to the city life that easily persuades the thoughtless to think that it stands for progress and culture. So we find in the country the moving picture show, the cheap vaudeville, the ultra-fashionable styles and the edition of the yellow journal only twenty-four hours old. Can we look to the country for a religious revival? Have not the simple primitive conditions which exalted the fundamental instincts and kept the affections pure disappeared? Is not the country an annex to the city? Are not all the objectionable tendencies of city life found in the country with the repression of the fine and ennobling things of city life?

If we are candid with ourselves we are forced to admit that there is a tendency in this direction. To any unprejudiced observer it is plain that many of the evils of the city have filtered their way into the country and are deeply intrenched. In spite of this I be-

lieve the country offers the opportunity for implanting Christian virtues and winning men to Christ. A healthy individualism and strong independence prevail. Even the tenants are not subservient to the owners of the land; they resent being dictated to by any individual; they pride themselves upon exercising private judgment. Opportunities to earn a living are plentiful. Industrialism in the city has destroyed the basis of economic independence. Too often the courage of men in the city has been destroyed by the constant fear of poverty. Work is not always plentiful in industrial centers. Men learn one trade; if they are thrown out of work in their chosen occupation they find it hard to enter another. Often the employers are dictators; they try to force those who work for them to do their bidding outside the daily routine of toil. Many times they succeed in their obnoxious purpose. The mass consciousness is more prevalent in city than in country. People are in such close contact with one another that they unconsciously influence one another by psychic power rather than reason. The Christian gospel makes an especial appeal to the independent man. Christ lamented over Jerusalem. His message, so simple and yet so deep, seemed to the city man entirely irrelevant. On the well curb, in the fields, by the seashore, and on the mountain sides, He found listening multitudes.

Again, life in the city has grown mechanical. Only a few are alive to new possibilities and have the necessary obligation laid upon them to be versatile. The average man has learned his place in the great machine of modern industrialism. No new problems thrust themselves into his life, except, perchance, he be displaced. One thing he has to do and very often so simple is this operation that in a brief space of time habit makes this action automatic. Only recently I read of seven men being employed to make one pin. The deadening effect of this can hardly be imagined. The man who finds his only contribution to the world the lifting of a lever or the manipulation of a machine soon loses the incentive

necessary to make life a joy. He is not an artist, he turns out no finished product, his skill is displayed in no cunning piece of workmanship, the stamp of his own personality is on nothing that he does. Sometimes he lives in a daily fear lest a new machine be devised by the ingenious mind of the inventor to displace him. He is a cog. This fact is emphasized when the employer looks upon the laborer as a unit of earning capacity; and the labor leader looks upon the man as someone to be herded with the flock so as to protect common interests. The fact that he is human is forgotten.

In rural life we have a striking contrast to this; work is often hard and exhausting; it is, however, always under more favorable conditions. Plenty of fresh air, sunshine and wholesome food are to be found in abundance. The city, with its tendency to bring about abnormal conditions, is absent. In its place are the restful country scenes conducive to meditation and original thinking. The monotonous drone of the bee, the song of the lark, the wooded hillside and the harvest fields indicative of rich returns in autumn lend poetic charm. Work there is in abundance, but it always has the charm of variety. Each day's task calls forth new powers and exacts the full measure of ingenuity. The rural dweller is in contact with nature; its mysteries are constantly arousing wonder and forcing the mind to question the nature of the underlying reality. The beauty of flower, the fragrance of orchards, the fertility of field, do they not furnish abundant material to bring home the great truths of religion and keep the mind inspired with perennial freshness? Country life prepares the mind to receive Christian truths. It gives illustrations to convey the deepest facts of religious experience. In the presence of the great power and beauty of nature man cries out, "My Lord in whom I trust."

The Christian religion is surely hampered in the city by the belief on the part of the populace, fostered by some of the members of its own household, that it has not been as vigorous in making practical application of Christian truths as in proclaiming it

from the pulpit. Often it has been asserted that Christianity has been content to preach minor moralities and to condemn the venial sin of individuals when it should have proclaimed universal truths applicable to existing conditions and should have scathingly denounced its rich pewholders. The work the church should have done is being advanced by organizations filled with Christ's love, but entirely emancipated from ecclesiastical dogmas. The distrust of organized Christianity in the city can only be overcome by a long and persistent championing of every good cause by Christianity, and a most vigorous condemnation of evil, even though it temporarily suffer injury. In the rural communities no such prejudices need to be overcome. The church is looked upon as the friend of mankind, the advance agent of culture, charity and spiritual life. Movements are beginning to challenge its place of supremacy, but these movements are only in incipient stages and are often looked upon with distrust. The church, by avoiding the mistakes made in the city, by being aggressive to champion every worthy cause, by being innovator, may become the very soul of rural life. Instead of the city leading the country, the country may lead the city. Country life definitely won for Christ would mean that the cities would be brought into subjection to Christ's kindly yoke.

Through what agency is the church to fulfill its possibility of being thoroughly Christian? We are wont to ascribe all movements to the social mass. In this I am convinced we make our mistake. Huxley said, "The advance of mankind has everywhere depended upon the production of men of genius." It is the mind that has the deeper insight, the larger vision, the finer moral purpose, that ultimately leads its fellows. The history of the progress of Christianity is marked by the rise of successive leaders great enough to be transmitters to their own generation of the Christ life. Recently a most thorough investigation was made into the religious life in the rural districts of one of our central

Mississippi Valley states. The dismal story of the failure of the churches in this state was that they lacked leaders capable of making the gospel understood and Christ a reality. Christianity must turn the passionate genius of educated, idealistic young men into the fields of Christian service. It must show them that no civilization has ever outlasted the demise of its religious faith. If democracy is to be a success, if civilization is not to retrograde into paganism and thence into barbarism, there must be a religious life in every community which stands for the mystic vision, for the sense of the unseen, for communion with the timeless, for withdrawal, for central-rootedness and rest.